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Shared Housing: 40 years in the making. **page 4**

ROSE STRICKLAND #25

HAPPY HOLIDAYS AND A JOYFUL NEW YEAR!

GROUNDCOVER 15

15 YEARS OF NEWS AND SOLUTIONS FROM THE GROUND UP | WASHTENAW COUNTY, MICH.

What the community thinks of university police. page 8

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GROUNDCOVER NEWS

PROVIDING ECONOMIC OPPORTUNITIES FOR SELF-DETERMINED INDIVIDUALS IMPACTED BY POVERTY,
PRODUCING A STREET NEWSPAPER THAT GIVES A PLATFORM TO UNDERREPRESENTED VOICES IN WASHTENAW COUNTY,
PROMOTING AN ACTION TO BUILD A JUST, CARING AND INCLUSIVE SOCIETY.

Groundcover News, a 501(c)(3) organization, was founded in April 2010 as a means to empower low-income persons to make the transitions from homeless to housed, and from jobless to employed.

Vendors purchase each copy of our regular editions of Groundcover News at our office for 50 cents. This money goes towards production costs. Vendors work selling the paper on the street for $2, keeping all income and tips from each sale. Vendors are the main contributors to the paper, and are compensated to write and report.

Street papers like Groundcover News exist in cities all over the United States, as well as in more than 40 other countries, in an effort to raise awareness of the plight of homeless people and combat the increase in poverty. Our paper is a proud member of the International Network of Street Papers.

International Network of Street Papers

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Trust in the New Year

LA SHAWN COURTWRIGHT
Groundcover vendor No. 56

This Year have been
full of setbacks, mental anguish
almost to the point of despair
Yet, so far by grace
I have been able to bear
I've learned a whole lot
Most of it
I wish not to share
Cause there's a whole lot of ugliness
My eyes are open
Oh yes, I'm aware
of things about a lot of people
I'm especially being careful
to avoid their ill intentions and snares
So please leave me alone!!
With this in mind
It inspires me to know,
that with constant faith,
I trust that I will have a bright,
Happy New Year!!!!!!!

The Last Holiday

DENISE SHEARER
Groundcover vendor No. 485

Even though I have seen it countless times, I love the movie "The Last Holiday" with Queen Latifah and LL Cool J. It is a very beautiful movie for any time of the year and for any day of the week.

I think what the movie is really about is letting all people know that life is precious and short and to live it the best way you can while you are here in this life. It reminds us that we all have to go to our eternal life sometime or another.

The movie's story is good because Queen Latifah's character went to a dream hotel and had the best time of her life. She made lots of friends and enjoyed good food and good activities. The whole movie was beautiful; all her dreams came true and she helped other people in the movie too.

The movie was also adventurous; she went snow skiing and on parachute balloon trips — that's something I don't think I'll ever have the guts to do. She made friends with the hotel staff, especially the cook, and they cooked together and made delicious food.

She got her restaurant and her husband at the end of the movie. I would tell anyone that this is a good movie to see. "The Last Holiday" is a very beautiful movie.

You can stream "The Last Holiday" for free online on Pluto TV!

Operation rescue

DAVID MITCHELL
Groundcover vendor No. 661

Washtenaw County is one of the most beautiful places to live, work and play. Home of the University of Michigan, Eastern Michigan University and Washtenaw Community College, this great place draws some of the brightest and best minds from all around the world. The brain power of this county's residents makes Washtenaw a destination for many of us, including me.

Despite our lovely parks, flowing rivers and incredible trees, there lies a problem that can no longer be ignored: the growing number of homeless individuals residing in Washtenaw County. On any given day the average resident is just one decision of fate away from joining the homeless community here. The government shutdown resulted in countless calls for action by all of us to rise up and join the fight to end homelessness in Washtenaw County.

My solution is to launch a county wide initiative titled "Operation Rescue." This very simple yet strategic plan mobilizes every resident to raise their consciousness, their cell phones and their voice to speak out on the growing humanitarian crisis taking place right here in our county. Operation Rescue could be the launch pad for a super-sized community initiative like no place else in this country.

Operation Rescue does not require an entrance fee, any type of formal education or training, only a heart and mind that are willing to move off of the sidelines and into the game to achieve victory over homelessness. All you have to do is open your eyes and witness the many men, women and children who have been forced out of their homes, apartments and dorms to the bitterness of living on the streets of Washtenaw County.

You might say, "This will never happen to me, and this is not my problem." You may be right, but then again, all of us who are now proud members of this growing homeless community said that, too.

So my fellow friends in Washtenaw County, join me in an effort to raise awareness which is the true beginning of any meaningful movement that has ever brought about positive change. My commitment to this cause is great, and believe me when I say that I personally have more skin in the game to take the lead in growing this simple concept. If turned into a countywide call to action, this initiative has the potential to change the world, one man at a time, one woman at a time, one child at a time, and literally save one life at a time.

Now don't be surprised when you see me walking next to you wearing an Operation Rescue t-shirt. Don't be surprised when you see me kneel down to offer a small child a McDonald's gift certificate as an act of kindness to make sure the child has something to eat for that day. Don't be surprised when you see me walk a new friend into a restaurant to share a warm meal and a friendly conversation to gently ease the pain of hunger, and loneliness, that come with being a member of our community, the homeless community of Washtenaw County.

Shared Housing: 40 years in the making

WAYNE S.
Groundcover vendor No. 615

ANGELINE TRAN
Groundcover contributor

It is a subject whose time has finally come. We interviewed Danielle Bryant of Washtenaw Housing Alliance (a coalition of over 30 non-profit and government entities committed to ending homelessness), who is the coordinator of WHA's Shared Housing Project. To introduce Danielle: she came to Ann Arbor a little over 13 years ago while experiencing homelessness and has been connected to this community ever since. Her lived experience is what led her into social work, and she earned her degree from Eastern Michigan University. Danielle spent over five years with Avalon Housing, where she helped pilot and expand their harm reduction programs and supported the development of a community program at the Hickory Way Apartments. She is now with the WHA and is very excited about the relaunch of the Shared Housing Program and its anticipated impact on our community.

As introductions were given, Angeline and I were very impressed with Danielle's resume and found her to be a wealth of information on this subject.

Wayne: Can you tell us a little bit about this program?

Danielle: Sure, Wayne, it is called Shared Housing, and it is intended to match home seekers in need of affordable housing who have specific needs with the right home providers who have extra space in their homes. Participants must be at least 18 years old, and at least one of the participants must be 55 years old or older. There will be a lot of other prerequisites that we could write a whole notebook on with plenty of safeguards to put in place, but ultimately, it will be up to the home provider's discretion. Shared housing is not emergency housing. We are trying to create an affordable housing option with existing under-utilized housing stock in the community,

Wayne: Can you talk about why the program shut down after 40 years?

Danielle: The previous program, known as HomeShare, run by the Housing Bureau for Seniors, was shut down because of COVID. WHA is trying to revive the program, which is now called Shared Housing.

Wayne: What piqued WHA's interest in reviving the program?

Danielle: After going over it, I find it to be completely doable and something WHA should be playing a more active role in.

Wayne: This sounds like you're sold on this program!

Danielle: Yes, Wayne, you're right about that! After taking a close look at this program, I find it to be challenging, but with the right people who I am in the process of putting together, it could be a real winner in our community. I realize that there are a thousand paths to achieve the same goal of ending homelessness.

Wayne: Well Danielle, Angeline and I are honored to be the ones to introduce you and your project, Shared Housing, to our readers.

My main goal in this article was to do just that. We were happy to interview Danielle concerning the progress of the Shared Housing program. They are in the process of coming up with a plan. From what we've heard, it is innovative and progressive. Thank you very much for your time and information, Danielle!

Danielle Bryant, Washtenaw Housing Alliance's Shared Housing Project Coordinator.

So, if you, the reader, find yourself really interested, you can go to whalliance.org/sharedhousing. This website explains this program and the people involved much better than I could, and will continue to reflect progress.

Free Transportation

Older Adults Transportation

Free transportation for adults aged 60 and older that reside in Washtenaw County.

Transportation providers shown for their pickup area; contact individual providers for more information on destinations and roundtrips.

Great news! Washtenaw County Seniors can now receive FREE transportation!
Transportation to and from medical appointments, pharmacies, vaccination appointments and government offices will be prioritized. Rides will also be available for other essential trips such as grocery shopping, banking and community activities. Please refer to the map to determine each providers service area.

Contact Information:

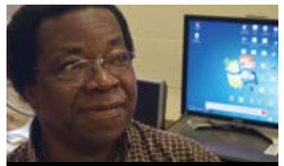
Jewish Family Services (JFS):
734-769-0209 ext 2

People's Express (PEX):
877-214-6073

Western Washtenaw Area Value Express (WAVE):
734-475-9494

Questions call 734-222-6850 or
Email: AgingServices@washtenaw.org

Healthy People 2000: A comprehensive health policy initiative (part one)



WILL SHAKESPEARE
Groundcover vendor No. 258

The Healthy People 2000 initiative was a strategy of the federal Department of Health and Human Services to improve the health of Americans by the end of the century, released in September 1990. It contained 319 policy recommendations in 22 priority areas. Although there was no single legislation passed in the 2000s titled, "Healthy People 2000 Act," a few key pieces of legislation passed around that time that were related to the goals and objectives of the "Healthy People 2000 Initiative." Included in the legislation passed around that period are the Children's Health Act of 2000; Minority Health and Health Disparities Research and Education Act of 2000; and the Public Health Improvement Act of 2000.

What is the Healthy People Initiative?

The initiative started in 1979 when President Jimmy Carter's Surgeon General issued a major report entitled, "Healthy People: the Surgeon General's Report on Health Promotion and Disease Prevention." Shortly after, in 1980, another report was released entitled, "Healthy People 1990," the first set of measurable ten-year objectives for improving health and well-being nationwide. This initiative was followed every ten years to set objectives for a healthy population — in 1990 for 2000, 2000 for 2010, 2010 for 2020, and currently, a report issued in 2020 which aims to improve public health in 2030.

Healthy People 2000 was designed to help achieve the following three goals: to increase the span of healthy life; to reduce health disparities; and to achieve access to preventive services.

Although we've made a lot of progress, the United States still faces many challenges. Healthy People 2030 currently provides a framework for addressing emerging health issues like COVID-19, the opioid epidemic and e-cigarette use — along with ongoing issues like heart disease, cancer and obesity.

In order to achieve Healthy People 2000 Initiative's goals and objectives, the policy architects of the Healthy People 2000 wanted good data for patient education and a better system for tracking progress at state and local levels, such as Michigan and Washtenaw County. The program designers also wanted to improve prevention effectiveness through better implementation guidelines and technical assistance.

Subsequent rollouts of the Healthy People Initiatives in 2000, 2010 and 2020 called for the elimination of disparities, not just reducing disparities. The concept of "Social Determinants of Health" was included as a key measurement tool. All four iterations of Healthy People focused on the promotion of community health and prevention. The 2010 Healthy People Initiative engendered policy debates which influenced Affordable Care Act legislation. The 2020 Healthy People Initiative was equally ambitious in innovative technology in data collection, processing, analysis and reporting. A key focus of the 2030 Healthy People Initiative is the elimination of disparities, and the increased use of social factors to do so. Like 2020, the 2030 initiative called for a broader use of factors such as transportation, environment and neighborhoods in health policy debates.

Because of the acrimony and contention which followed the Clinton Administration's proposal called "The American Health Rescue Plan" of the 1990s, Congress was reticent about passing major health care legislation. Congress did not intend to pass legislation called "Healthy People Act of 2000." However, it was interested in the goals and objectives outlined by the Healthy People 2000 initiative. Congress provided adequate funding to the state and local government as well as the federal Department of Health and Human Services. Funding was made available to the State Department and the Defense Department for risk factor surveys of American government workers overseas and in different time zones. The federal government's Department of Health and Human Servies, National Institutes of Health, Centers for Disease Control and the National Center for Health Statistics were encouraged to use the best methods and methodology to provide information on the health of American people. This information is intended to help policy decisionmakers at all levels of government make informed decisions. Some notable policy planners like Robert Dahl have warned us about "making decisions under the veil of ignorance." Wolfanger Stolper of U-M warned about making policy planning without adequate facts.

In 2023 Washtenaw County ranked as one of the healthiest counties in Michigan. This ranking shows the county does well in areas like education, jobs, and access to health care. Reports from the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation and MLive also found that people in the county live longer and that it had the lowest COVID-19 death rate in the state. This suggests that public health efforts are working well.

Even with these strengths, the county still faces serious challenges. Black babies are more likely to be born at a low birth weight than white babies. Many health problems are also linked to issues like housing, income and access to resources. In addition, higher rates of depression among people on Medicare show that mental health support is still needed.

Above all, literacy stands out as a key goal of understanding community health. Groundcover News' role as a community newspaper will help maximize the health literacy of Washtenaw County and other nearby counties. Health literacy at the individual level and the organizational level is highly encouraged. It is up to us and society to do our best to improve our rankings among the healthiest communities in Michigan.

HAPPY NEW YEAR!

What's Happening at the Ann Arbor District Library

Open 10am–8pm Daily
Visit any of our five locations across town to browse books, magazines, newspapers, and more. Check out movies, CDs, art prints, musical instruments, or even home tools—you name it! Enjoy fast and free WiFi, study and meeting rooms, and plenty of comfortable spaces to relax or hang out.

Byte Club
An exclusive club for AADL SUPER FANS and library people like you! Byte Club will help you connect deeper with the Library you know and love, and share special sneak peeks of new things coming soon. The first rule of Byte Club is that you tell everyone about Byte Club! Ready to join? Visit aadl.org/byteclub to get started.

Public Computers
The AADL has public-access Internet computers available for use by both cardholders and non-cardholders at all five locations. Each station has USB ports, headphone jacks, and some of the fastest wifi speeds in town!

FEATURED EVENT

Saturday, January 25 • 1–4 PM • Downtown Library
AADL's annual Preschool Expo brings reps from area preschools to one location on one date! Connect with schools in Washtenaw County and explore the best options for your family. Find a list of participating schools at aadl.org/preschoolexpo.

People in the Neighborhood: Lakira

People in the Neighborhood is a Groundcover News column that focuses on the unhoused community in Washtenaw County.

JIM CLARK
Groundcover vendor No. 139

The first thing I thought when I met Lakira was that she was a unique individual. Her manner of dress reminded me of a fortune teller. Her eyes were a striking blue that seemed otherworldly. Her manner suggested regency. Lakira told me she was a Pisces. If you follow astrology — it fits.

"Where did you grow up?" I asked.

Lakira replied, "South England. I was born in Tennessee, but was raised in England. My parents were aristocrats. I was born into something that's not normal, that I'm [just now] learning. It was strange, I lived with relatives, my mom and I had this peculiar relationship. She was just like a presence. You know? I only knew of my dad; never had a relationship with him. I'm just accustomed to traditions that are not normal. And I'm trying to break that cycle. Because I broke free and I'm a genie out of the bottle and I'm never going back in."

I was a little astounded. I followed up asking, "All right, so would it be helpful to talk about some of those things? They sound kind of personal, but if you're willing to share, that's great."

She replied, "In short, I come from a world where I had no say in anything, literally anything. Little gestures and phrases would dictate my behavior and responses. I didn't tie my own shoes until I was 21, and I didn't dress myself alone until I was, like, 24. That should give you a perspective on how much control they had over me. That was only a decade ago."

Shocked, I asked her how that impacted her as an adult.

She replied, "I'm vulnerable to a lot of things. I don't know. Like, I'm coming from a world where I'm not accustomed to having any outright emotional or physical contact without being told who or what I could connect with. It's intoxicating [the connections]. So once you have something, you don't want to let it go. So, I guess I'm not clingy, but at the same time, once I have a connection, I'm doing everything possible to keep it. I'm loyal to a fault, and it's a problem.

"People take that to the extreme, and use it, and abuse it, and then somehow I'm wrong for being loyal. It doesn't make sense to me, but fuck me for caring right? And then how can you care and say you love me, and 'you're such a keeper' to me and at the same time [abuse me]? That is true sin in a way I cannot comprehend. And I don't know if I'll ever forget it. Forgiving it is a whole other level. You know? Because I don't hold grudges, and I'm not vindictive, but at the same time, fuck that noise. I see you now. Thank you for showing me, and I'm good on that. You know?"

"Who are you being loyal to?" I asked.

"Everyone who probably is unworthy of my graces," she informed me.

"Let's pivot," I said, "you're homeless now. How long have you been homeless?"

"This is my fourth winter being homeless," she added for emphasis.

"What's in the works for you?" I asked. "Is the county helping? Are you on a list of some kind?"

She replied, "I'm on many lists, but it's tiresome, it's kind of tedious now, and annoying.

"I met the mayor and a city councilman in person," Lakira continued. "I said to them, 'You know me. You know what's going on. You had to accommodate me for an extended period of time because you destroyed all my shit. You were fully aware of me and my situation and yet, here we are.'"

During her second winter of homelessness, the Ypsilanti City Council threatened to evict Lakira from her campsite near the downtown area. The temperatures were typical for February in Michigan — single digits and teens. After much protest from activists and good samaritans, the City provided a storage cube for Lakira's property while she sought another place to sleep. Cell phones are easily lost during homelessness. Lakira lost hers and was unable to stay in contact with the City regarding her things. The cube was removed. Lakira's property is now in the wind.

"I went to Detroit for a minute," she recalled. "There was some other program out there, and it seemed safe."

"You went out there to get help that you couldn't get here?" I asked, to clarify.

"Yes, but it didn't work out," she replied, "I had switched my things over only for them to withhold my stuff to the point where all my food benefits were cut. Because they refused to just sign off and just say, I was no longer there. I was only there for like five days, six days. Then I get out there, and I'm left in my post-situational vehicle, being like, detained from me, it was weird."

Lakira lost her car while in Detroit. "Where's your vehicle?" I asked.

"It's gone now," she replied.

"How did you lose it?" I asked.

She answered, "Someone hit it and the engine came off."

"You weren't able to fix it?" I asked.

"No," she answered. "It went to the junkyard. I was like, fuck it, I don't want it."

"You weren't able to get another vehicle?" I questioned.

"No, because my credentials kept getting stolen from that point on. My driver's license, my credit cards, every month, continually lost or stolen for the past two years. Every time I get caught up, something happens and all of a sudden my tablet's broken or it's missing. My phone, my wallet just falls into the abyss, even though I just left for 30 seconds. I know I just had it, I'm not crazy. I can't lose something I'm constantly touching! I've been traumatized by it!" she said excitedly.

I strongly related to her predicament. During my homelessness episode I repeatedly lost keys, wallets and cell phones like they were travel mugs.

"And then," she went on, "I know for a fact that people are being hired to harass me. And I have had people confess to such things. Like, they're actively seeking to sabotage me, hurt me, or worse, you know? I know this for a fact. It's something I'm not making up. I have people literally just truly flat-out tell me 'Hey, this is what I'm supposed to do.'"

"What do you need to be in a better place?" I asked.

She replied, "I need my proper credentials back, first. That's the foundation. I need a safe place to stay for three to six months—somewhere stable, without a constant time limit hanging over my head. I just need a place where I can exist and regroup, not be out here in a tent or constantly moving."

"What kind of work can you do?" I asked.

"I'm mostly exempt from traditional work right now, but I do have skills," she replied. "I teach mostly human anatomy and portrait art. That's what I'm good at. I just haven't had the chance to do it because I can't focus while I'm dealing with all this. I need a foundation first. Once that's in place, I can move forward from there."

"Last question: if you could go to college for free and study anything you wanted, what would it be?" I asked.

"A kind of a cross between human psychology and archaeology," she replied.

"Interesting," I responded. "Okay, why archaeology?"

"Because I'm a history buff," she said. "I've always had an urge to chronicle. To keep records. I come from a world where I'm surrounded by history, so it's just ingrained. I have a long history of family records stretching far back and I've been here before multiple times."

"Hopefully this life works out better," I added.

Lakira replied, "Indeed."

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Please visit the church website at:
www.bethlehem-ucc.org for the most up-to-date calendar and event information.
Jesus didn't turn people away. Neither Do We. United Church of Christ
Sunday Worship Time
10:00 am In-person and via Live Stream

My favorite conspiracy theory: working hard = success

CARSON WURSTER
U-M student contributor

Author's note: The man who I am writing this about wanted to remain anonymous, so he is just referred to by his pronouns in this essay.

His smile was the first thing noticed; his tired eyes were the second. His face showed exhaustion, but he still greeted everyone with warmth and an inviting smile. As a dishwasher at the restaurant where we worked together, he cleared mountains of dishes each shift with the kind of effort most people bring to their dream job. But washing dishes wasn't all he did. He bussed tables when servers fell behind and jumped in to help deliver meals or refill drinks without being asked. He even chatted with guests when he got the chance, not for tips or praise, but simply to feel seen.

For two months, I honestly just thought he liked to stay up late or had another job to get to after ours ended. I never imagined he was homeless. I assumed he went home after his shifts, like the rest of us. I had no idea "home" meant wherever he could remain safe from whatever weather Michigan decided to bring that day.

Depending on the forecast, he walked between 25 and 45 minutes to the restaurant every day, rain or shine, snow or humidity. He left early to make sure he was always on time. And he didn't just work one shift. After finishing a 12-hour day in the back of house, he would sometimes stay overnight for maintenance, cleaning the entire restaurant or fixing equipment, not for ambition or overtime, but because staying at work meant protection. The restaurant was comfortable. Outside wasn't.

He was homeless the entire time, and so many others, like myself, didn't know for months.

He never asked for pity. He never acted like a victim. He treated everyone around him with respect and kindness, even while carrying a burden none of us could see at a glance. That realization hit me the hardest. He was struggling to survive, yet still made sure others felt supported.

One night when I was annoyed with a difficult customer, I complained to him about it. He didn't roll his eyes or feed into my frustration. Instead, he politely told me, "You never know someone's story. Treat others the way you want to be treated." I brushed it off then, but now I understand. He said that because outside of work, he was treated as if he were invisible simply because he had no roof over his head. And yet he was doing everything society tells us to do: get a job and work. In his case, he was doing the work of two or even three jobs all within one workplace. His life was proof that hard work doesn't always secure stability.

There's a belief many people hold: if you work hard, you'll be fine. Hard work guarantees a home, a bed, air conditioning, heat, clean water and safety.

But he worked harder than anyone I knew, and he still spent nights solely trying to survive.

His determination within the workplace revealed the uncomfortable truth we all need to come to terms with: hard work does not guarantee housing. National estimates show that 25-40% percent of people experiencing homelessness are employed at any given time. Many hold demanding service jobs while earning too little to cover rent, transportation and food. In Michigan today, a full-time minimum-wage worker cannot realistically afford a typical apartment without working far beyond standard full-time hours. A paycheck doesn't always equal a pillow or a nice bubble bath.

His story proves that. He was doing everything right, and it still wasn't enough.

That changed how I see the world. It taught me that compassion cannot be conditional. You never know who is fighting a silent battle just to get through the day. You never know who is walking for nearly an hour in freezing snow or blistering heat just to reach their shift. You never know whose hands are numb, not from dishwater, but from sleeping outside the night before.

We like linear stories: the hardworking succeed, the lazy do not. His life told a much different story, one far more honest, especially within the economy we all live in now.

When his shift ended, he didn't drive home. He didn't step into a cutely decorated living room or crawl under comfy blankets. He walked back into the unpredictable elements of Michigan's night, hoping he could find enough hope to make it to the next day.

Hard work doesn't guarantee shelter. Only humanity does.

So the next time someone says people experiencing homelessness just need to "work harder," think of a man who did and still had nowhere to go.

WINTER PROGRAM INFORMATION
DAY TIME WARMING SHELTER LOCATIONS:

Location	Address	Dates Available
Ypsilanti Freighthouse (Mon.- Thur., 8am-6pm)	100 Market Place Ypsilanti	Nov. 10, 2025 - March 31, 2026
Delonis Center (Weekends only)	312 W. Huron St. Ann Arbor	Nov. 10, 2025 - April 14, 2026
Lord of Light Lutheran Church	801 S. Forest Ave., Ann Arbor	Dec. 22, 2025 - Jan. 2, 2026 EXCEPT DECEMBER 25TH
Ann Arbor Friend's Meeting	1420 Hill St. Ann Arbor	December 25, 2025
St. Mary's Student Parish	331 Thompson St. Ann Arbor	Jan. 5, 2026 - Jan. 30, 2026
First Congregational Church	608 E. Williams St. Ann Arbor	Feb. 2, 2026 - Feb. 13, 2026
First Baptist Church	517 E. Washington St. Ann Arbor	Feb. 16, 2026 - March 27, 2026

All Washtenaw County office building lobbies are available as warming center sites during normal business hours.

Unless otherwise specificed, all above warming shelters operate Monday through Friday during normal business hours. If you have any questions or need more information, please contact the Delonis Center at **734-662-2829**. For updates, visit **bit.ly/washtenaw-warming**.

WASHTENAW COUNTY MICHIGAN 1826
OFFICE OF COMMUNITY & ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT
Collaborative solutions for a promising future

Last updated: 12/16/25

OVERNIGHT SHELTER INFORMATION

Winter shelter information: Winter daytime and overnight shelter accommodations are available throughout the winter shelter season from **November 10, 2025 - April 14, 2026** for any individual seeking emergency shelter during the cold winter months.

- **Daytime shelter** - Monday - Thursday, 8am - 6pm at the Ypsilanti Freighthouse (100 Market Place, Ypsilanti, MI 48198)
- **Overnight shelter** - Nighttime accommodations are at the Delonis Center; 312 W. Huron St., Ann Arbor, and at offsite locations including Congregation partners throughout the County, and there is an overnight shelter in Ypsilanti. During day-time hours, those seeking overnight shelter should first contact HAWC to obtain a referral for shelter at 734-961-1999.

How do I get into the shelter?
Any individuals or families seeking emergency shelter please contact Housing Access of Washtenaw County (HAWC) at 734-961-1999 to obtain a referral to the Shelter Association of Washtenaw County (individuals), Alpha House (families), & SafeHouse (survivors). If it is after 5pm or weekend, if you're an individual, please come to or call the Delonis Center (734-662- 2829) and we'll assist serving you. Families, please come to or call Alpha House for assistance anytime at 734-822-0220.

What is provided at the shelter?
Individuals are provided a safe place to sleep each night and can access a wide variety of services including meals, case management, medical care, and most importantly help finding permanent housing.

For updates and more information:
bit.ly/washtenaw-warming

What the community thinks of university police

MARIE
Groundcover contributor

This article focuses on the history, evolution and current climate of policing at Michigan's two oldest Universities, the University of Michigan and Eastern Michigan University. Community members' voices presented in this article may call Washtenaw County home. This article brings perspectives from as far as the Atlantic coast, the Pacific, Lake Superior, the Caribbean, and citizens of other countries. The people interviewed for this article were all adults, varying in age from freshman in college to late adulthood. Interviews and data collection occurred from Nov. to Dec. 17, 2025. The voices presented here vary in indentity, encompass a variety of university stakeholders, and do not all have the same economic circumstances. To protect anonymity, all community members will be referred to as "Buddy."

The early years of local university policing and public safety

According to a 2021 written summary available through University of Michigan Bentley Historical Library Division of Public Safety & Security (DPSS) records, U-M officially created a public safety and law enforcement unit in 1970. The first university watchman is reported to have been hired in 1898 to "maintain its rules and regulations as well as safeguard its property from damage." In 1946, the university began subsidizing the City of Ann Arbor police to patrol its parking lots. In 1959 U-M utilized the services of Sanford Security Service to "safeguard the campus." According to the library summary, U-M established its own safety and law enforcement unit due to problems addressing oversight issues between clashing personnel and student protestors during the late 1960s. DPSS had its first two deputized officers with arresting power beginning in 1988.

The following summary of how EMU's Department of Public Safety (DPS) was established is taken from a paper written in 2010 by Michael E. Marotta, titled "The Early History of the Eastern Michigan University Police Department." In 1961 an Ypsilanti police officer, John Hayes, was assigned to EMU, where he worked with a nightwatchman. In 1962, Hayes was "tasked with building a police department dedicated to EMU." In 1967 the "EMU Board of Regents defined the powers of the campus police department and authorized the hiring of more officers." While EMUPD started with an Ypsilanti Police Department (YPD) officer with the power to arrest, its oversight oscillated between the YPD and the Washtenaw County Sheriff's Department.

What seems to set early EMU DPS apart from U-M DPSS was its use of student officers and its overall approach. Student officers were required to have been attending the university for at least two years. The founding approach of the department included an attitude of "better outcomes for all" and "these are our leaders of tomorrow." Early leadership was dedicated to serving as mentors, counselors and peacekeepers. Early approaches included parking enforcement and pedestrian safety as well as addressing crime such as larceny, car theft and sexual assault on campus. Student sentencing for minor offenses was intended to instill a better sense of community through support from the 14th District Court and being employed on campus.

1990s university policing changes with the passage of Act 120

University policing in Michigan entered a new era in the 90s with the passage of [Michigan] Public Safety Officers Act 120. According to the Michigan Legislature website, Act 120 of 1990 is "An act to empower the governing boards of control of public four-year institutions of higher education to grant certain powers and authority to their public safety officers; to require those public safety officers to meet certain standards; and to require institutions of higher education to make certain crime reports."

Act 120 has four sections, the first of which explains officers' power and authority. Power and authority include enforcing state laws, ordinances and regulations of the institution, and requires a public safety department oversight committee to address complaints against officers or the institution's public safety department. Section 2 outlines jurisdictional boundaries; section 3 requires minimum employment standards, and section 4 requires monthly crime reporting to the state.

UMPD does not have an accessible jurisdiction map; however, the U-M website explains UMPD "patrol all campus buildings and grounds, 24 hours a day, seven days a week. UMPD officers have authority to investigate, search, arrest and use reasonable force as necessary to protect persons and property and to enforce the laws of the State of Michigan and the Ordinance of the Regents of the University of Michigan." U-M Regents have a printable manual called "An Ordinance to Regulate Parking and Traffic and to Regulate the Use and Protection of the Building and Property" which specifies jurisdiction as "all property owned, leased or otherwise controlled by the Regents of the University of Michigan."

A PDF of EMU's police jurisdiction map may be obtained via internet search; however, during a visit to EMUPD a Buddy easily explained jurisdiction as the main campus, west campus, Loesell Field Labs, Clark Radio Tower and Eagle Crest. The internet map of jurisdiction essentially connects EMU property, and encompasses buildings where students live off campus.

Community feedback on university policing

Buddy 1 went to University High School, U-M and EMU, and retired from a safety position in Ann Arbor. "The purpose of university public safety is to have a helpful dedicated force within campus. Schools are their own little worlds, responding to issues specific to campus. Students can be a challenge, may come with an attitude of entitlement or think they know better. They may come from out of town and disrespect property and community. A lot of problems are encountered with underage youth drinking, using drugs and not being responsible under the influence. Problems are increased by the influence they are under.

"People prey on the vulnerable. My friend went out with John Norman Collins [the serial killer who preyed on U-M and EMU female students in the late 1960s], but thankfully didn't have pierced ears. [To quote an article about Collins by Kevin Lamb "Similar to Ted Bundy, most of his victims were young co-eds with long-brown hair and pierced ears."] Sheriff Harvey didn't really increase patrols as a result of the Collins killings. In school our math teacher who was also a Wash-tenaw Sheriff's deputy, kept an eye out for us, and also patrolled the school.

"In the 60s and 70s people came and hung out all over campus, but they weren't part of the U. A lot of the disturbances were brought in from the outside, and some people wanted things to get violent. Peaceful protesting people express opinions; however, things can get emotional, which can become volatile. AAPD just couldn't handle the riots and were overwhelmed so the National Guard came in.

"Additional training is needed for dealing with college age and types. People in authority need to be careful who they hire. Do they have a good sense of keeping themselves under control or are they easily pushed to violence? When emotions and tension is high things are very volatile. A police force can easily draw characters trying to prove how macho and tough they are."

Buddy 2 is a current student, with a first UMPD experience of "being concerned about identity theft when trying to register to vote via one of the people on campus offering help to complete the form. They gave me some information about how to address the issue, but not much else. It was resolved when I was able to vote. They

see **POLICE** page 13 ➡

Journalism mentorship program

The Journalism Mentorship Program for Groundcover News freelance writers is a program that will help make better news reporters through mentorship and workshops.

We live in a time where there is a unique distinction between corporate media and independent media sources. We also live in a time where anyone at any given time could be involved in journalism by using their cell phone to capture something newsworthy, simply by recording a video. Most videos you see on news networks are videos sent in by ordinary everyday people.

From January to May 2026, former local journalists Jud Branam, Laurie Lounsbury, Laurie Mayers, Linda Odette, Joe White and Dave Wilkins from The Ann Arbor News, Wall Street Journal, Ypsi Press, etc. will pair with Groundcover News freelance writers. Each mentor will teach a set of concepts through an assessment of work published to date and collaboration on new stories. Mentors will give feedback and suggestions on improving leads, adding voices and sources, writing tighter and more story-focused content. Each freelance writer will collaborate with a mentor on at least two story submissions to be published in Groundcover News.

MIKE JONES
Groundcover vendor No. 113

There will be four main workshop meetings once each month, Jan. to May: Basic interview workshop in January, AP stylebook workshop in February, Story construction workshop in March, Research workshop in April, and in May, a final meeting and celebration!

The freelance writers who want to be involved in the mentorship program must apply by answering three basic questions:

1. Why are you interested in participating in this program?

2. What specific skills do you hope to build on throughout the four-month program?

3. What is one barrier you predict to experience (yourself) while participating and how can we help you overcome it?

I would like to share my answers to these application questions:

I'm interested in the Journalism Mentorship Program because I would like to learn more about overall journalism, especially from experienced newspaper journalists.

From this mentorship I want to learn about investigative reporting and how to better conduct news interviews and transcribe the words of the interviewee.

I love to write and report news stories and at the moment I can't say what barriers I might face, but I'm sure there will be some and I will face those barriers with the Journalism Mentorship Program to become a better journalist.

My overall thought on the Journalism Mentorship Program is that it will help Groundcover News freelance writers become better news reporters, and as a result, readers of Groundcover will be more informed on social and political issues that are not covered by other news publications, especially on a local level.

St. Francis of Assisi Parish
"If God were your Father, you would love me, for I came from God and am here; I did not come on my own, but he sent me."
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Come Worship With Us!
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from the ARCHIVES

15 YEARS OF NEWS AND SOLUTIONS FROM THE GROUND UP

Resolutions, recovery and growth

SANDRA SABATINI
Groundcover vendor No. 233

As I've progressed in life, my annual goal or New Year's resolution always seems to get harder and harder to accomplish. The first New Year's resolution I ever remember doing was three years ago, and that was that I could stay sober throughout the coming year (2016). That was hard at first, but I did it. On Jan. 5, 2017, I celebrated my first year sober with a one-year coin from Alcoholics Anonymous.

My New Year's resolution to start 2017 was about as much as I could handle at the time — that I could maintain the sobriety I had achieved for that first year. I added that I could start working out and overall paying better attention to my physical health and eating habits. And so it happened. I celebrated the coming of 2018 with two years clean and sober, and the workout routine and better dieting had started happening.

I felt I had to challenge myself harder the following year. So my resolution then was that I would start helping others with the same struggles I had experienced before getting sober. That's supposed to be really helpful to someone new to recovery.

A person new to recovery is usually overwhelmed by all sorts of problems, like losing their driver's license from a DUI, losing their jobs or housing, losing custody of their kids and other legal issues. So, helping someone new to recovery is really good for them because they get to better focus on putting the drink or dope down. At the moment, it can seem insurmountable for them. If they don't have the smaller battles to fight or worry about, they can better focus on what recovery is or looks like. They feel cared for and next thing you know, you see them caring for themselves too, at least enough to stay sober for another 24 hours.

I feel I did pretty good throughout 2018 doing that. I helped many people newly in recovery, giving them rides to meetings, fellowshipping with them, meeting with them for coffee and talking with them. I even temporarily sponsored a few individuals for a few months. I showed them the recovery literature and the 12 Steps. I also volunteered at a few different places that focus on people trying to better their lives. And I even gave a few big donations to some charities, fundraisers and the homeless shelter.

I was homeless too at some point before getting sober, so I know what it is to be out there in the cold. So, it meant a lot to me to be able to give forward to others what at some point had been given to me by strangers. I have helped a lot and it worked both ways. It helped me get out of myself, and overall, out of the thoughts that linger in my mind to the point they drive me nuts sometimes. I was able to worry less in my everyday concerns by showing up for others and their worries.

However, to start 2019 on the right foot, I want to focus more on me now for my annual goal. I want to experience growth. I wasted so many years of my life. I wasted a third of my life, honestly. I thought I was getting or trying to get a career at some point, but all I did after all was become a loser. I lost everything. What didn't I lose?

I could go on and on about what it was that I lost, but now I want to focus on the opposite. I want to gain. I want to gain experience. I want to gain faith. I want to gain friends and fellowship. I want to gain a caring and honest heart. Mostly, I want to gain confidence, and the ability to be good at something for the first time.

So, I have a few projects in mind that I want to put my focus and attention on this coming year. But I can't share those details now because "it'll make them unachievable," or so my mind tells me. Maybe in my next article I'll write about one of them, at least. And maybe right now I'll just say what that is about. It is about my wanting to get more involved with Groundcover News, mostly publishing many articles.

Anyways, I wish all the Groundcover readers a happy new year. Thanks for your support, and I hope you, too, achieved your 2018 annual goals and that you have set a realistic 2019 goal to accomplish.

Originally published in the January 2019 edition of Groundcover News.

Groundcover Vendor Code

While Groundcover is a non-profit, and paper vendors are self-employed contractors, we still have expectations of how vendors should conduct themselves while selling and representing the paper.

The following is our **Vendor Code of Conduct**, which every vendor reads and signs before receiving a badge and papers. We request that if you discover a vendor violating any tenets of the Code, please contact us and provide as many details as possible. Our paper and our vendors should be positively impacting our County.

- Groundcover will be distributed for a voluntary donation. I agree not to ask for more than the cover price or solicit donations by any other means.
- When selling Groundcover, I will always have the current biweekly issue of Groundcover available for customer purchase.
- I agree not to sell additional goods or products when selling the paper or to panhandle, including panhandling with only one paper or selling an issue more than 4 weeks old.
- I will wear and display my badge when selling papers and refrain from wearing it or other Groundcover gear when engaged in other activities.
- I will only purchase the paper from Groundcover Staff and will not sell to or buy papers from other Groundcover vendors, especially vendors who have been suspended or terminated.
- I agree to treat all customers, staff, and other vendors respectfully. I will not "hard sell," threaten, harass or pressure customers, staff, or other vendors verbally or physically.
- I will not sell Groundcover under the influence of drugs or alcohol.
- I understand that I am not a legal employee of Groundcover but a contracted worker responsible for my own well-being and income.
- I understand that my badge is property of Groundcover and will not deface it. I will present my badge when purchasing the papers.
- I agree to stay off private property when selling Groundcover.
- I understand to refrain from selling on public buses, federal property or stores unless there is permission from the owner.
- I agree to stay at least one block away from another vendor in downtown areas. I will also abide by the Vendor Corner Policy.
- I understand that Groundcover strives to be a paper that covers topics of homelessness and poverty while providing sources of income for the homeless. I will try to help in this effort and spread the word.

If you would like to report a violation of the Vendor Code or leave positive review of a Vendor experience please email contact@groundcovernews.com or fill out the contact form on our website.

Do we really rest during the holidays? Rethinking what "taking a break" actually means

ANGELA JENNINGS
Toledo Streets

During the holiday season there is a widespread assumption that people naturally slow down, relax and recharge. In theory, this period is meant to offer a break from routine responsibilities, an opportunity to reconnect with others and a moment to simply breathe. However, the lived reality of the holidays often diverges significantly from this ideal.

The purpose of this article is to examine why rest can feel increasingly difficult during a season that is traditionally associated with ease and comfort. All of this to ask: do the holidays genuinely give people space to rest, or have they become another source of pressure and expectation?

To begin, it is important to consider where our ideas about holiday rest originate. Popular media tends to portray the season as inherently peaceful — complete with quiet mornings, warm drinks and uninterrupted time away from obligations. Yet many people report the opposite experience. Travel preparations, financial strain, extensive social obligations and the emotional weight of family dynamics all play a role in reducing the chance for genuine rest. In other words, the holidays may promise rest culturally, but they do not consistently provide it practically.

Next, it is necessary to acknowledge the role of emotional labor during this time of year. For many, the holiday season comes with the expectation to be cheerful, grateful and energetic, regardless of personal circumstances. This creates a kind of performance-based joy — something that people feel obligated to maintain rather than something that they naturally experience. Social media contributes to this phenomenon as well, as people compare their celebrations to curated depictions of perfection. Ultimately, when joy becomes performative, rest becomes secondary.

The question of rest is also tied closely to emotional energy. Being surrounded by family or friends, even when those relationships are positive, can be mentally demanding. Reconnecting with people one sees infrequently, managing group conversations, and balancing different personalities require sustained effort. For some, this can be fulfilling; for others, it can be exhausting. Rest, therefore, is not only about time away from work but also about mental clarity and emotional space — two things that the holidays do not always guarantee.

In analyzing holiday burnout, one common factor emerges: a lack of boundaries. Many people feel obligated to attend every event, fulfill every tradition, or assume the majority of hosting responsibilities. Yet rest is rarely possible without intentional limits. Those who report feeling genuinely restored after the holidays often set clear expectations ahead of time — saying no when necessary, dividing tasks among family members or opting for simpler gatherings. Establishing boundaries may appear counterintuitive in a season centered around togetherness, but it can actually enhance the quality of connection rather than diminish it.

Recently, there has been a noticeable shift toward embracing a more simplified holiday season. Some people are choosing smaller gatherings, reducing gift exchanges or eliminating high-pressure traditions altogether. This movement, sometimes referred to informally as a "rest-focused holiday," reflects a growing desire to reclaim the season as a time of genuine restoration rather than obligation. Prioritizing meaningful moments over elaborate plans allows people to participate in the holiday experience without sacrificing their wellbeing.

While the holiday season is traditionally associated with relaxation, it does not always function that way in practice. The combination of social expectations, emotional labor and blurred boundaries can make rest difficult to achieve. However, by approaching the season with intentionality — simplifying where possible, setting personal limits and reducing performance-based pressure — people may experience a holiday that aligns more closely with the restful ideal. Rest, ultimately, is not inherent to the season; it is something cultivated through conscious choice.

Courtesy of Toledo Streets / INSP.ngo

More lies from hell

TOMMY SPAGHETTI
Groundcover vendor No. 668

Glossary: Hell=Detroit, lies=stories, Mboob=girlfriend, bucket=mini-van, popo=Police, cray cray=Crazy, Lie-Downs=Detroit Lions, drips=hours

Mboob kicks me out at 3 a.m. It's the night after Turkey Day. You know, Turkey Day, the day when all anyone cares about is eating gross meat and watching the Lie-Downs lose another football game. I know, I know, it's really Thanksgiving but it's really a faux exercise of gratitude toward an extinct population. Remember the "Indians?" Remember the Pilgrims? What a horrible lie we commemorate, but I digress.

The only reason I mention Turkey Day is because it's the day I was cast back into the streets by Mboob. Yet another foray into the mean streets of Hell. Yet another attempt at surviving the cold winter without adequate shelter. This time I leave with just the clothes on my back. No phone, no blanket, no backpack but I do have scrilla in my pocket and a BUCKET!

Goatboy left Michigan for warmer temperatures. Not sure how it happened that he had two buckets in his possession but I ended up with the least desirable one. Erick: "Tommy Biscotti, can you get my van from the mechanic's and park it in Mboob's driveway?" I am sponging Mboob's house, heat, phone, fridge and Goatboy wants to impose his van on her driveway.

Calling the mechanic: "Hello Chris?" "Yes." "I'm calling about Goatboy's bucket." "Yeah Tom, it can't stay here or it will get towed. You better come and get it."

24 drips later ... bicycling to the mechanic's house I notice the weather has changed from bearable to cray cray cold. Loading the bicycle into the van, stabbing the key into the steering wheel column VROOM!!!!

This bucket has a strong engine. Of course the gas gauge says empty. Putting the bucket onto Mboob's driveway triggers DOOM N' GLOOM from her. "It's gonna leak fluid onto the driveway, the neighbors are going to complain blah blah blah!"

The siren breaks the silent night. Five minutes later I'm out of the house, leaving with curses lashed at my back. Driving this gifted bucket, it's more like a magic carpet made of steel with wheels.

3 a.m. and I'm steering towards a 24 hour gas station in Hell, my favorite petrol station because there's always a drug deal happening in the candy aisle and a blunt getting puffed in the doorway. Not wanting to reveal its true location out of deference to its proprietor, I call it 1313 Mockingbird Lane. $60 worth of E-85 and I'm off.

Being homeless is different in a bucket. Doesn't seem as drastic or severe. Like, if the scenery looks grim, just press the pedal and steer to another location. At the witching hour I'm cruising through Hell. Hardly any other buckets competing for time and space. Darkness permeates these lies. Dark van, dark road, dark sky. Only neon lights on closed businesses pierce this noir theme. My heart is black, my future is bleak but for some strange reason my mouth is singing an Irish ditty that I created 25 years ago.

Over the past 19 years Mboob and I have had numerous conflicts. At one time I worshipped her feet with broken toes and felt like we were perfect mates. Mboob has much to love and appreciate. But after two decades that love has pickled. Nuptial conflict always feels like adolescent behavior.

Homeless, NOT car-less. Little house on the highway. This bucket lacks legal representation from the Legal Cult. Never saw a title, registration or proof. Pretty sure if the Popo pulls me over, they're hooking it.

Goatboy wants to sell this bucket to me for $1000 but after driving it a few miles I feel like he should pay me $2000 to take it off his hooves. I just hate this capitalist orgy, the car thing. Driving this bucket around instead of walking, bicycling or busing only proves my own hypocrisy.

The only saving grace to my reputation is that this bucket drinks Ethanol. The internal combustion engine originally ran on ethanol. Distillation of crude oil proved to be more profitable for the oil and chemical companies. 100 years of smog laden cities, bribe coated politicians' oil wars and there seems to be no turning back. This E-85 bucket also has a large solar panel covering the entire roof. Totally awesome!

I end up at Train Wreck Dave's house and he is not home. The lonely cat welcomes me inside where I sleep until I don't know when. No phone, no clock. A cold house only makes the blankets more comfortable. Sleeping and dreaming until the sun peeks into the bedroom.

Stabbing the key into the steering column again and VROOM! This bucket moves to Flappergirl's condo. She is not home either so I goldilocks another bed. Love the stocked houses with the unlocked doors. This homeless but not bucket-less existence is proving to be something I can get used to.

Rainbows and Dreamer

STEVEN
Groundcover vendor No. 668

It was my friend JR who turned me on to Rainbow Gatherings. He laid it out as something like, it's a large gathering, lots of different people go, but it's basically a big hippie thing. Money was not allowed. If you wanted to sell something it was a barter system. Drinking at the Gathering was not allowed, though you could drink in the parking lot. The parking lot is usually a solid walk from the main Gathering. It was in this case, but I still checked it out. I wasn't as crazy a drinker then but I liked the edgy vibe and people were generous with the booze.

All that really mattered was I was going to see my brother from another mother (JR) and we were going to camp. I was sold on that alone and after I had done some digging and figured out more of what it was, I was stoked for the Gathering as well.

This was pre-ubiquitous-or-useful internet. I think you may have had the dancing baby, whatever else, but for someone with my skill set it was just for email really. I didn't get into all the news groups and chats and what not so what I learned about the Rainbow Family was from word of mouth and newsprint pamphlet kind-of-things. Different people had different nuggets of information that may or may not have been accurate. There was a little bad-mouthing but nothing that seemed like I would care about, or that seemed likely to be true.

I thought it was going to be pretty cool and I was not disappointed. It was awesome. I knew there would be hippies; it was definitely a hippie thing. It had been around for many years by the time I went in the nineties and it had evolved beyond the basic hippie, free-love, no-war shtick. It very much was a real time example of a way of life that was sustainable, viable and worked on a macro scale.

There were tens of thousands of people there, as it was a national Gathering. I'm curious what form it takes now. Everybody pretty well knew the FBI had it in for the Rainbow Family as it was called, and since it was the 90s, the word 'cult' was thrown around liberally.

I was blown away by my experience in Shawnee National Forest. It was a profound and formative experience made especially special with the presence of JR and the new friends, aka family members, I made, including my soon-to-be very good friend and partner in exploits, Dreamer.

I had gotten a sweet ride from the truck stop just south of Chicago. It was a long ride-less hitch, as in no rides, from the southern El stop to this truck stop. I went around asking truckers for rides south and was shot down often. I didn't know at the time and was a bit salty over the lack of cool truck drivers. I had always figured truckers were cool with giving rides and hitchhikers and I think many are, but it's a big no-no with their insurance and with the companies that hire the employed ones. An old guy (he was probably younger than I am now at 50) said "hop in" after quickly sizing me up and guessing correctly that the tall gangly teenager in front of him wasn't going to be a threat. It was late and he was driving through the night and figured on some company.

We bullshitted and talked music. He talked about the life of a trucker in non-glowing terms. I still think I'd like to be a trucker, only I drink too much. He told me some stuff about CB talk. I knew a tiny bit; my Grandfather had had a CB in his car. This guy was laying on the real shit. Smokey was in fact a handle for cops, like the movies.

The one that really sticks out to me was the chicken coops. The chicken coops were the weigh stations. If you've driven on very many of the big freeways you will have seen them. Lines of trucks on a pull-off and a small building. This was not explained to me in detail but I gathered the gist of it was weight allowances on different stretches of freeways and maybe some sort of potential anti-smuggling cop-type stuff? Like if your manifest says you're hauling this weight of feathers but in fact you're hauling a heavier load of Stretch Armstrong dolls, you get nailed. The part that mattered to us was if the people at the chicken coops would know whether or not a truck was supposed to have two people in the cab and would cause problems for a trucker with an extra person.

He had warned this might be a thing and long before the coop was in sight the word over the CB was the one coming up was open. He asked me to hop in the back of the cab, not the trailer. I jumped back lickety-split. I had never seen the inside of a sleeper semi before. I thought it was awesome. Just a small bed, a few shelves, a TV, etc. Yes, please! We went through the coop no problem and bullshitted our way to the Carbondale off ramp. We parted ways as if we were maritime men of old. "I'll probably never see you again but if I do I'll fight you over who buys the drinks" kind-of-thing.

I consulted my worn road map with a smoke. I had to get from Carbondale, Ill., over to the Shawnee National Forest. This ended up being easy enough. There was a lot of traffic headed out that way. Lots of cars and lots of hitchers. I was quickly picked up to fill the last seat of a car on its way there. We were close enough that the driver didn't sweat any kind of gas money or whatever, plus he was an old hat at the Family vibe and was in a no-money frame of mind. Only two of the five people in the car were original. One guy had been picked up hundreds of miles previous, then me just at the final stretch.

As we drove past dozens of other hitchers and hikers on the bumper-to-bumper side streets, the driver, a veteran of the Gatherings, was laying it out for us new guys. A lot of what he said confirmed what I'd already gleaned in my research. Lots of hippies chillin', playing drums, getting high. The no-money thing was very serious as was the no-drinking-past-the-parking-lot. Of course violence was right out; even in the parking lot it was like "bro whats your problem?"

As he's talking, he is falling into old remembered types of speech. Everyone is his Brother or Sister, he's hoping certain kitchens will be represented at this Gathering. Self-govern yourself, he says. That tracked with what I'd read but the way he put it hit harder. Everyone is responsible for their own behavior and like any family helps each other to avoid problems. There is no central leadership, there are old-school people who have lived this traveling the country for years and are skilled at conflict resolution and deescalation. If someone tries to help you, they probably aren't trying to scam you. He even mentioned consent, more for the one guy I think who was very dialed into the idea of a bunch of hippie chicks walking around naked and what that might mean for him. There were a lot of cute hippie chicks in all degrees of dress and undress and I, of course, failed to pick up on the ones who were flirting with me.

Food was provided at one of the many kitchens which were bush kitchens and, I would realize years later, all run with food safety at the forefront. They had cool names and different specialties. I think all of them were vegetarian? I can't remember, certainly almost all of them. I think if you wanted meat you cooked it at your camp. Nobody went hungry, nobody was asked to do anything to get food. Help was always accepted and appreciated. I washed a lot of dishes in a triple-bucket (triple-sink) set up. Wash, rinse and sanitize, just like a restaurant. The guy who nominally ran the kitchen I ended up going to most was named Tree, he swore it was his given name and he had been traveling with and working in this kitchen for years. I think he hauled a lot of the supplies and certainly was key to the kitchen working. He ran it by example and gentle suggestions.

Shawnee National Forest is, well, a national forest. It's vast; everyone and anyone has the run of it. I had kind of meekly asked around,where should I camp? Or is it true I can just camp anywhere? The old-timers just kind of smirked behind their beards and assured me anywhere was fine unless I was being weird and camping right up next to someone who hadn't invited me to do so. I was intrigued. Anywhere huh?

I had a hammock and thought I had figured out the ultimate camping hack. I hadn't. Sure, I could put it wherever and easily move it around but I didn't know at the time that hammocks aren't warm. All that open October air between me and the ground was no kind of insulation. After my first cold night I knew I needed a change of plans. I didn't have a sleeping bag, those things are big and bulky and it was warm when I had set out to my friend's place in Chicago. I had put a lot of stock in the hammock idea.

I spent the next day scouting around for some sort of shelter or a good place to set up a lean-to. I thought I had hit the jackpot when I found a dry waterfall cave I could post up in. I learned ancient stone and modern concrete have heat leaching in common. It was still as cold as the hammock but I could make a fire. I would stoke up my fire, fall asleep on the pointless brush I had piled up until the fire went down and the chill woke me then re-stoke the fire, repeat. Could I have found a warmer spot not on life-sucking cold stone? Well yeah, but this was a cave, I was sleeping in a cave so, that part.

I found Dreamer at what he called a camp that day and dragged him back to my cave. The cave wasn't really much better than what either of us had already but, and I can't stress this enough, it was a cave! I was 19 and already had my own cave. Dreamer and I became fast friends fast — we clicked, we smoked so much weed, we played in the drum circles. I often would hand off my drum and dance ecstatically. We hatched schemes and plans and before we knew it we were set to go to New Orleans any way we could.

➡ **POLICE** from page 8

gave me a free bike lock when I registered my bike, but did nothing when my friend's bike was stolen. I registered my electronics, but I don't really expect them to help if they are taken. A lot is about ego and control, not protect and serve. My grandfather was a cop and good-hearted; the good-hearted often get other jobs. Those who become police 'maim' other people. Even the nicest, with the culture, can get sucked in, a lot do fit negative stereotypes of racism, prejudice and violence. I don't like 'All Cops Are Bastards,' but we need a measured response and nuance."

Buddy 3: "I don't really go to Ann Arbor, Eastern, they're full of shit. They like harassing people from Deja Vu to the beer cooler. They trespassed me from the downtown library through EMUPD."

Buddy 4: "U-M: if you go on their property they have jurisdiction. Went to the hospital and I looked homeless. I had my stuff and my bag. I went there for a headache, and asked security for help with directions. Went to the bathroom and was confronted in the bathroom by three, one security and two police. They asked if I needed a psychiatrist, overly focused on psychiatry. I was treated like a violent criminal threat, [because I'm] homeless and a poor vagrant."

Buddy 5 is a current graduate student in Washtenaw County, and an EMU alum. "EMU police — their ability to get someplace lacks, they are a little late to things, late to emergencies and not as helpful to college students. When they have to take up Title IX things [sexual assault], they don't find the person who did it. They say, 'We'll let you know if they find them,' and they don't follow through. When things happen on campus they don't patrol or protect the community enough. [Campus police] have cars that sit by buildings during the day and night and that is a step forward in protecting the community, and some that walk around, right on campus. That is good, definitely have a presence on campus. In Greek life they come to our parties when they get calls because someone complained and they ask us to turn down the music. They sometimes enjoy a hot dog, chill, enjoy the party, and after multiple calls they would flash a light and were dicks. Parents taught me to not trigger them but sometimes they have other things going on and you don't have a lot of control."

Buddy 6 has been local seven years, and is currently a U-M graduate student. "I haven't gotten charges. I'm strongly against the existence of cops, experience has been entirely negative. When they respond to protests and direct actions, they are looking for reasons to brutalize protesters and students. They will beat and assault protesters and tell you they are concerned about your safety while they are beating you up and assaulting you. You are blocking the sidewalk so we're going to stomp you into the ground. I don't think they should exist but we should have groups that don't just plaster the word safety and actually care about the community and are willing to work towards safety collaboratively and not carcerally."

Buddy 7 is an international EMU alum and was enrolled to begin graduate school Fall 2025, until a trespass impacted the start date of the program. "The purpose of DPS should be for students to feel safe and heard, and to take care of students and their neighborhoods. They should be able to go to them, feel heard, not worry, feel safe, and they should help them out as much as they can. I don't know if it was my situation or case, but I didn't feel I was heard. I asked them to check the cameras, but they didn't use their tools. Others have had similar situations and they [EMU] have done due diligence. Court has impacted my social circle, taken an emotional toll, cost me for a lawyer, and I'm continuously stressed out."

Buddy 8 "was trespassed for a year from Shapiro Library, about five years ago, for having too much fun. They don't have the same tolerance for homeless people that Ann Arbor police have. You have to watch out and keep your head on a swivel when you are in the library."

Buddy 9: "I like [U-M], but in my last car accident I didn't have updated insurance, and they let me update my insurance, let me go with addressing it within 24 hours. I was at work at the hospital in security which works with the police. U-M is not like Eastern, EMU are bullies in the community, they do stop and frisks. U-M doesn't do stop and frisk and they probably get over twice as many cases. [EMU police] hang with the local city and state police, which gives them another level of racism and racial profiling. Nobody's really 10 years in and they act like it's the 80s. 'I'm legit' and they harass us at the gas station. A lot of people don't know their rights, more harassing than problem-solving. They aren't part of the community, don't want to be a community member or a community officer, they are against the community, not even of a mindset to be a part of it. U-M doesn't really go out of the way, but they are more optimistic and sympathetic about who they talk to."

In closing, there were many similar experiences, concerns and overall impressions among those interviewed. The community expressed contrasting attitudes for the future of university policing ranging from complete abolishment to feeling they have purpose but need reform. Since the introduction of local university policing around the time of the civil rights movement, the climate around the campuses remains similar especially as it pertains to concerns around free speech, violence, and civil rights. Both universities claim to be committed to highly-trained and qualified personnel, yet the reality for most community members is the police escalate situations and lack the ability to connect meaningfully with the community.

PRISON BREAK

MARQUETTA "Q" CLEMENTS
Groundcover contributor

Prowling through the Jungle
Gorillas taught me fight or get killed
Weakened but ambitious
Became Tarzan with the blood and tears that I've spilled

Paranoid and mistaken
Still I Rise, unshaken
Born broken, you can't break me
Nothing to lose
The world is mine for takin', who lost?

Felt hopeless, now it's clear
My angels led me here to bring war
Everything shall burn, so the phoenix can soar

Ahold of us he grips
Media censorship
The poor raised in pits
No glory, no grit
Protect this land of Holiness

Pharoah clutched his hands on his sword

A Patriot I boast
Lead me like Moses my lord
Walk by faith my sight unfolds
"Let my people Go"

War before defeat
Land of the brave, the free, the dream

Have we lost our way?

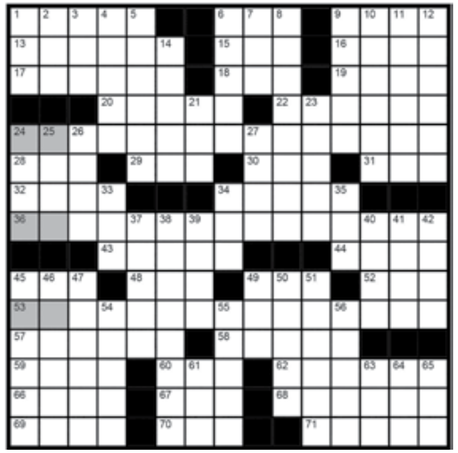
Like the Boston Tea Party
Strike back
Free meals for prisons vs children school lunches taxed
I'm furious, attack

It's time for a prison break
Break every chain

Café Liv
Art on a Journey Gallery Presents
Rachel
Jan 3 - Jan 31
Art on a Journey Gallery is thrilled to present the art of Rachel Perazza. Rachel was born and raised in the Detroit area with a brief time in Puerto Rico. Most of her work is Abstract with some Still Life, but her passion lies mostly in the emotions and thoughts portrayed in the human face. Her hope is that by reflecting these expressions back to the viewer, something can be touched bringing awareness on a much deeper level, therefore initiating change.
Artist's Reception Saturday, January 10, 2026, 2:30 - 4pm
At Café Liv
202 N Washington St, Ypsilanti, Michigan 48197
www.ArtOnAJourney.Gallery/Rachel

HO, HO, HO!

by Victor Schmitt



ACROSS
1. With 71-Across, holiday figure suggested by the santa shaded
6. Big name in peanut butter
9. Places to get pampered
13. Jerry's friend, on "Seinfeld"
15. Singer DiFranco
16. Ireland, to the Irish
17. Heartless character in "The Wizard of Oz"?
18. Bud
19. Word with flat or fixed
20. Home of Agra
22. Countdown starter
24. Stay home, slangily
28. Queer identity, in brief
29. Year, in Yucatán
30. Comic's trait
31. Phillipa who plays Eliza in "Hamilton"
32. Wall street action
34. Guy on TV?
36. "Sacred" weapon used in a Monty Python movie
43. Mathematician known for the constant "e"
44. Tournament ranking
45. "Blue Bloods" network
48. Published, as a newspaper article
49. Droop
52. Like a nonagenarian
53. Song with the lyric "You can check out any time you like, but you can never leave"
57. Ukrainian city
58. Fortnite item shop purchase, maybe
59. Doesn't sow
60. Biological "messenger"
62. "Hoo wee!"
66. Like some truths
67. Face card's value, in blackjack
68. Shirt-coloring technique
69. Backtalk
70. Dawn goddess
71. See 1-Across

DOWN
1. "Game, ___, match!"
2. "Thrilla in Manilla" boxer
3. Mum's mum
4. Shy
5. Key disciple of Buddha
6. Country whose flag symbolizes a rising sun
7. "___ nutshell..."
8. More dirty
9. Flourish on a typeface
10. Yamaha products
11. Conductor Toscanini
12. Handles
14. Finish with
21. ___ Jima
23. Unit of length across the pond
24. Jumbled mess
25. Black and white Nabisco cookie
26. Hang out
27. Bit of kindling
33. Caustic chemical
34. New Deal prez
35. Connections
37. Chucks
38. Ordering option at some restaurants
39. "99 Luftballons" singer
40. Long, long time
41. Sandwich shop
42. Icelandic literary saga
45. Repeated song part
46. Neighborhood grocery store
47. Amazing deals
49. Character in a popular video game franchise
50. Underway
51. European architectural style
54. Annual athletic award
55. Depends (on)
56. Defiant sort
61. "The Matrix" hero
63. Computing pioneer Lovelace
64. The Cougars of the N.C.A.A.
65. "Can I help you?"

Sudoku ★★☆☆☆☆ 4puz.com

		7				9		
2				4				6
3			1		6			2
6	8	3				2	7	5
	1		7		2		3	
7	9	2				4	6	1
5			4		1			8
8				3				7
		1				5		

Fill in the squares so that each row, column, and 3-by-3 box contain the numbers 1 through 9.

PUZZLE SOLUTIONS *December 12, 2025 edition*

A	B	S	T	R	U	S	E	R
P	A	L	A	E	S	T	R	A
S	C	U	T	C	H	E	O	N
E	K	E	■	T	E	A	S	■
■	■	■	W	O	R	D	■	B
A	L	T	A	R	S	■	C	R
D	U	R	R	Y	■	G	R	U
A	T	O	M	■	F	R	U	I
R	E	D	B	R	E	A	S	T
■	■	■	L	A	T	C	H	■
■	B	O	O	T	I	E	■	M
A	L	G	O	I	D	■	K	I
S	A	D	D	O	■	B	A	S
P	R	E	E	N	■	U	N	D
S	E	N	D	S	■	S	T	O

B	U	S	B	Y				
A	N	T	R	A				
R	H	E	I	N				
D	Y	E	I	N	G			
O	T	A	N	Y	■			
C	R	U	E	L	■			
G	R	U	B	S	T	A	K	E
H	U	N	T	■				
C	I	L	I	A				
V	E	L	D	T	S	■	■	■
M	A	R	Y	■	■	■	■	■
K	I	S	T	■	R	A	M	■
B	A	S	T	I	N	A	D	O
U	N	D	E	F	I	N	E	D
S	T	O	R	Y	L	I	N	E

9	5	6	2	3	7	1	4	8
4	7	1	6	9	8	3	5	2
3	2	8	4	1	5	9	6	7
2	9	7	5	4	1	8	3	6
5	6	4	3	8	2	7	9	1
8	1	3	7	6	9	4	2	5
7	3	5	1	2	4	6	8	9
1	4	9	8	5	6	2	7	3
6	8	2	9	7	3	5	1	4

A Love Worth Becoming

MONIQUE CALDWELL
Groundcover contributor

We did not begin in youth,
but in the quiet strength of adulthood,
where friendship steadied us,
and trust became the soil of something rare.

Love revealed itself gently—
not rushed, not careless—
but tender, deliberate,
a flame worth tending,
a devotion worth showing up for.

With you, I have seen sides no one else has ever touched:
the softness behind your strength,
the gentleness that steadies my storms,
the courage to be vulnerable and let me see you fully.

In those moments I became more—
a better version of myself,
believing in my worth again,
learning that love restores what doubt and others once tried to take away.

Each year, we learn more,
not through grand gestures,
but through quiet acts of care—
listening, protecting, nurturing.

Friendship remains our foundation,
yet our love has grown taller, made
strong enough to stand against trials,
resilient enough to bloom again.

What we share is rare:
a bond that trusts,
a love that endures,
a companionship that reveals the hidden corners of our souls.

And when I look at you now,
I see not only the one I love,
but the one who shows me that great love grows deeper with each year.

Choose Love

PEDRO CAMPOS
Groundcover vendor No. 652

I see hate
I answer with love
When they divide, I unite
When they quit, I believe
When they hoard, I share

I'm like this
Not better
Just human

I feel cold
I get hungry
I sweat
I break
That's how you know I'm real

I follow rules
while others break them freely
They drink, fight, curse, steal,
smoke everything, everywhere
I don't

I don't drink
I don't fight
Weed is my medicine
legal in places you call civilized.
So why am I the problem?
Why am I pushed outside
Into the cold, the dark, the gutter?

What is it about me
that bothers you?

Is it my joy?
My health?
My freedom?
The fact that I shine
and stay humble?

I'm not a saint
I know my flaws
I face them
I look different
because I am

I sound funny
but I speak truth
I think
I reason

I'm not the same
But I'm not an alien
My blood is red
If you hurt me, I bleed

No race
No religion
No flag
I'm a cosmonaut
Like all of us
Riding the same fragile wonderful world.

What makes anyone think
they're above another?
That belief—
that's the real violence
The threat you expect from me
lives inside you

I want no revenge
I can only pray

I ask for basics:
shelter, food, work, love
A home
A family
Dreams
For me
For us

I want safety
I want to belong
It's hard enough being alone
Why make it cruel?

Why rules only for me?
Why push me into danger?

I'm clean
Quiet
Harmless

So why test me?
Why try to break me?

I'm not here to take
Not here to hate
I'm here to give
To grow
To open doors
To show another way

This is my calling
My purpose
My will is strong
I spread my vibe

And I know
what I'm doing

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Humane Society of Huron Valley
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(734) 661-3550

Bean dip

ELIZABETH BAUMAN
Groundcover contributor

Ingredients:
16 ounces canned refried beans
4 ounces cream cheese softened
½ cup sour cream
1 Tbsp. taco seasoning
¼ cup diced jalapeño (or more if you like it hot!)
4 ounces mild green chilies, drained
2 green onions, divided
2 ½ to 3 cups shredded cheddar cheese, divided

Directions:
Preheat the oven to 375°F.

Thinly slice the green onions and separate the white and green portions. Set the green part aside. In a medium bowl, combine the cream cheese, refried beans, sour cream and taco seasoning with a hand mixer until fluffy. Gently fold in the whites of the onions, jalapenos, chiles and 2 cups of cheddar cheese. Spread into a 2 quart (or 8x8) baking dish.

Top with remaining cheese and bake for 20-25 minutes or until cheese is melted. Sprinkle remaining green onions on top as garnish. Serve with tortilla chips.

An easy dip to make and perfect to serve at a casual party.

Perfect snacks for New Year's gatherings!

White bean dip

ELIZABETH BAUMAN

Ingredients:
2, 15.5 ounce cans white kidney beans
2 garlic cloves, roughly chopped
2 Tbsp. minced fresh shallot
¼ cup extra-virgin olive oil
3 tsp. freshly squeezed lemon juice
½ tsp. fine sea salt
¼ tsp. freshly ground black pepper
1 tsp. fresh rosemary needles picked from their stems
1 tsp. fresh thyme leaves picked from their stems

Directions:
Drain the beans in a colander, rinse well and shake off any excess water. Place all of the ingredients into the bowl of a standard food processor fitted with the blade. Process dip until perfectly smooth. You can let the machine run for a full minute or two, scrap the sides if needed. Transfer to a small bowl to serve with fresh vegetables for dipping.

A healthy snack to have on hand. You can store it in an airtight container in the refrigerator for one week.

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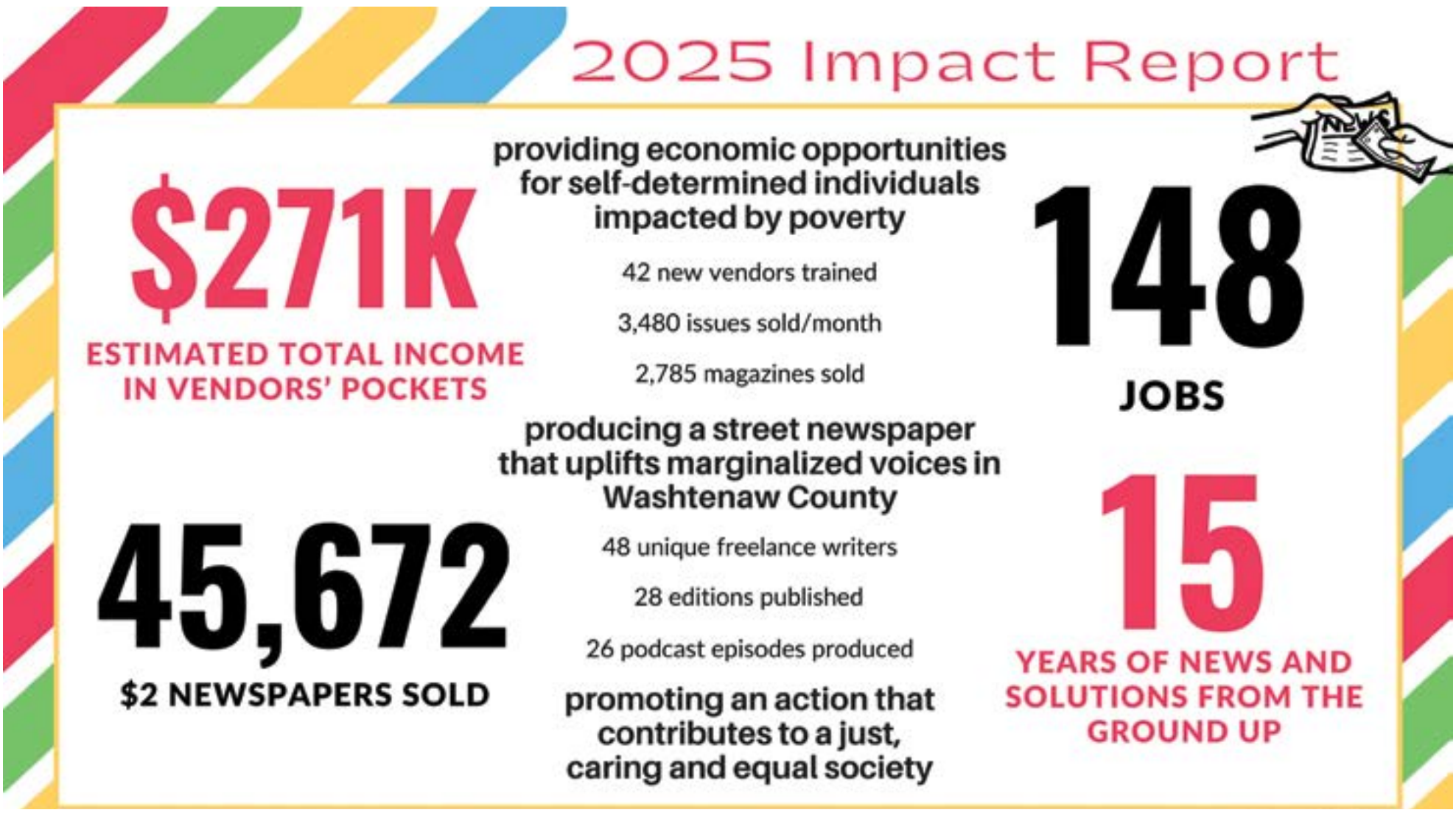
2025 Impact Report
providing economic opportunities for self-determined individuals impacted by poverty
$271K
ESTIMATED TOTAL INCOME IN VENDORS' POCKETS
42 new vendors trained
3,480 issues sold/month
2,785 magazines sold
148
JOBS
producing a street newspaper that uplifts marginalized voices in Washtenaw County
45,672
$2 NEWSPAPERS SOLD
48 unique freelance writers
28 editions published
26 podcast episodes produced
15
YEARS OF NEWS AND SOLUTIONS FROM THE GROUND UP
promoting an action that contributes to a just, caring and equal society